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PULPIT AND ROSTRUM.

Sermons, Orations, Popular Lectures, &c.

ANDREW J. GRAHAM AND CHARLES B. COLLAR,

REPORTERS AND EDITORS.

PROVIDENCE IN WAR;

A THANKSGIVING DISCOURSE

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PROVIDENCE IN THE WAR.

A Thanksgiving Sermon by the Rev. S. D. Burchard, D.D., delivered in the Thirteenth Street Presbyterian Church, New York, Nov. 28, 1861.

“Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes.” 2 Kings vii. 2.

WE have met to-day, in accordance with a time-honored and excellent custom of our fathers, who, in the simplicity and fervor of their piety, were wont to acknowledge the hand of God in all their worldly affairs. In adversity and trial, they humbled themselves under the almighty hand of God; but in prosperity, they restrained not praise, but poured forth their hearts in sublime and devout thanksgiving.

We have met to-day under circumstances of the most extraordinary character—circumstances so mixed and peculiar, and so intimately connected with ourselves as to strike home to the bosoms of us all with great and unerring force. If our circumstances are mixed, so are the emotions which they naturally engender. And in the sight of God, to whose penetrating gaze every thought and intention are laid bare, we present at this moment, in this His house, the

strange spectacle of a people filled with gratitude and thankfulness for manifold and seasonable blessings; yet, in the same instant, bowed down by the weight of a huge calamity, and with a painful sense of our need for His sustaining grace and protecting mercy. Such, indeed, is our situation, that while we praise the Lord that He hath given to us the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine, with the same breath we are compelled to exclaim: "Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered; let them also that hate Him flee before Him. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God."

We live in times at once the most appalling and the most sublime—times in which a country, springing from a people whose fathers have enriched the scroll of fame by names that shall never perish, written there with pencils dipped in the blood of patriotic martyrdom, once an experiment, but long since an acknowledged fact—times in which the degeneracy of a portion of the nation, recreant to honor and of suicidal intent, must be met by the stern determination of men who dare to do and who dare to die for the land that gave them birth. A patriot, all the world over, lives everywhere and forever in the minds of the good and the true. Amid other sources of knowledge, the history of the past is what a wise and a prudent people can never pass over in safety. A people neglectful of historic teaching is a people without a literature and without civilization; for history is the double finger-post in the world, whence we gain intelligence to improve the passing day. Of history there are two kinds—profane and sacred. Profane history is the record of men and events, either in their

progress or depression, without ostensibly regarding a Divine interposition. It spreads before us the past and acquaints us with the present. National observation centered here induces a firm and wise precaution; it marks crimes, for their extirpation; failures, to avoid their repetition; and takes hold of the last and highest point of advancement to link it to pursuits in which we are engaged. Sacred history is the history of God's dealings with man, and their effect; and of man himself as the instrument of executing the decrees of Heaven. To overrate the importance of sacred history is beyond our power. From the relief of individual want and danger, the inspired record advances to the protection of armies and the safety of peoples. A knowledge of the history of the world, and of God's own history *in* the world, in reality, enables a man to live twice, for he joins yesterday with to-day. The past is but a series of yesterdays, running back to the birth of time; and by their junction to the *now* of busy activity and turmoil, we behold again the mighty deeds that have been; and if of the household of faith, our confidence in Infinite wisdom is supported by the profound conviction that *wrong*, however plausible, overbearing, and extended, can never prosper; but that *right*, with the *might* of God behind it, and its sincere and earnest prosecution, shall in the end most gloriously triumph. Thus has it ever been, and thus will it ever be.

I shall now endeavor to prove, from the circumstances of the text, that all events which occur in this world are under the Divine control; that there is an overruling Providence ceaselessly watchful, bountiful, and working, from whom we derive abundance for the sower and the eater, the fruitfulness of labor, and the products for com-

merce; that that same Providence can alone give peace to a people, or regulate the surging billows of ruthless war; that He beholds the oppressed battling for self-preservation, and controls the contests and convulsions of mighty nations; and that if a national sin has been the cause of national convulsion, His operations will be aimed at its destruction. But if the preservation of the sin be the sole object of the strife, He may permit the integrity of the ruin to be just as complete, though the ruin be delayed.

“Jehoram, the son of Ahab, began to reign over Israel in Samaria. And he wrought evil in the sight of the Lord; but not like his father and mother; nevertheless he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin.” Here we have the unimpeachable history of a people professing to be separate from the errors of others—to be the people of God, and receiving of His mercy great and signal blessings—led by their rulers into adulterating the true religion, the doctrine of God, so pure, so holy, so unselfish. Calves of gold had been introduced as objects of divine worship. Yet these were better than their predecessors; for they had forsaken the grosser adoration of Baal and its attendant iniquities; but forasmuch as they had withdrawn their worship, though only in part, from the true God, to that extent unquestionably had they forsaken Him, and forsaken Him, their help in time of need, to devote regard to a golden image.

Elisha, the prophet, dwelt in Israel, upon which kingdom Ben-hadad, king of Syria, was disposed to make war. The preparations for war, *then* as *now*, were sought to be enshrouded in mystery; but Elisha was cognizant of every counsel the king of Syria took; and so completely aware was he of all his proceedings, that it was said to the king:

"Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in the bedchamber." This information was obtained through Divine revelation. The Syrian king desired the person of the prophet, and having ascertained where he was, sent, under cover of the night, horses and chariots, and a great host, and compassed the city about. The servant of the man of God rose early in the morning, and made this portentous, this alarming discovery, and in a state of trepidation said to Elisha: "Alas! my master, what shall we do?" Elisha, unmoved by alarm and unawed by danger, instantly replied, with heroic firmness: "Fear not; for *they* that be with *us* are greater than *they* that be with *them*." Such a reply, in their then condition, seemed to have no foundation in fact, and moreover bore the appearance of being contrary to the truth. Two men were unarmed and helpless, and surrounded by enemies who sought their destruction. And yet one of them could say, and say with consistency, that he had friends for his protection, immediately available, who were stronger than this army, terrible with banners, when not a single being was visible to render them aid and comfort. Elisha was right. Oh! the sublimity of faith, and its mighty power! Oh! the grasp it takes of the strength of God, to transform weakness into certain and irrefragable security! He saw more than sufficient to justify the assertion he had made. Elisha then prayed that the Lord would open the eyes of his minister; and he, too, saw, his gaze resting on a spectacle which, for bewildering grandeur and for rapturous beauty, can only be realized when God is pleased to unvail His majesty and to display His glory—a vision which can never more be repeated till the blood-washed soul, borne on the wings of angels, shall

pass the bright gate of Paradise, to sit with Jesus upon the eternal throne. "The mountain was full of horses, and chariots of fire round about Elisha." This was God's protection—grand, effective, unsurpassed, impassable! "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." Thus, we repeat, is it ever in the world, and ever will be. His shield is spread, though it be unseen by unbelief, and becomes a bulwark that can not be sundered. The Syrian soldiery, smitten with blindness, were taken captive, and could have been destroyed. But God was merciful, and, with restored sight, they were permitted to return home.

Still the king of Syria was dissatisfied. He thirsted for the conquest of the king of Israel, and commenced the attack by besieging Samaria. Prior to this, and even simultaneously, the horn of plenty had been emptied into the lap of the Israelites. The treasure of the people was great. The arts of peace were cultivated, and commerce supplied abundantly the nation's wants. But war disturbed their quiet pursuits, and let loose gaunt want to ravage and destroy. The famine was so sore, that an ass's head sold for four-score pieces of silver. As the king of Israel passed by on the wall, a woman cried, "Help, my lord, O king!" to which he replied: "If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I?" Prevailing misery led him outwardly to humble himself in the sight of God; but the sackcloth on his flesh was no index of the heart—he yet rendered divided homage to Jehovah. The errors of ages and of men long passed into eternity have not in all instances passed with them. Men of unstable faith, for their own interest, purposely pervert their judgment in tracing effects to causes. And, like the king who threw the blame of the disorders in his

kingdom on Elisha, they are willing to attribute disaster to any source but the right one. Israel was in the presence of an enemy remorselessly clamoring for empire. Commerce had ceased, the people suffered, and a surrender would involve destruction. His army, cooped up within the city, were held at bay by an implacable foe actively watching a favorable opportunity to strike a decisive blow. His position would soon be untenable; and humanly speaking, both himself and his kingdom must perish. With this crushing weight upon him, we are not surprised that he said, "If the Lord do not help, whence shall I?" But we are surprised he uttered these words without feeling their import. They involved the real issue. For unless Divine assistance came, the whole country would be overrun, and ruthless ruin would follow the footsteps of the maddened despot as he stamped his blood-red heel upon the liberties of a stricken and a prostrate nation. Faithless stood the ruler, with the words of eternal truth in his mouth, feebly hoping in Jehovah, but clinging strongly to his golden idols, *which sin* had given rise to the Syrian invasion. In his excess of wickedness, his blame of Elisha was in effect laying his sin to the charge of God; and the man of God who stood between him and death was impiously doomed as a sacrifice. "But Elisha sat in his house," calmly reading events as they progressed, and solemnly beholding the hand of the Almighty. With the arrival of the messenger of murder and of the king, the hour arrived for the prophet to make the happy but unexpected announcement—"Hear ye the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord, To-morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria." For

this to take place, the contest must be at an end. It implied that there should no longer be an enemy in front of the city; that peace once more should dwell within their borders; in fine, it implied an entire reversal of things now in active and relentless conflict. Where raging war had devastated and was still devastating; where all was gloom, and sorrow, and darkness; where a stricken people writhed within the meshes of an iron despair, there should succeed a restoration to former prosperity, and a re-visitation of quietude to a distracted land. And all this within the passage of less than four-and-twenty hours. Never was a nation so close upon defeat. Never had humanity drifted nearer to its uttermost extremity. But that moment so nearly an overthrow—yet not an overthrow—proved the Almighty's season of deliverance. The morrow came, and with it war gave way to peace, sorrow to joy, and danger to security. Such an illustrious act of Divine interposition, so speedy, so well timed, so thoroughly efficient, may well stagger the mind of the unbeliever in the goodness and providence of God. It did the lord on whose hand the king leaned; who, having heard the words of the man of God, said, "Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be?" To which Elisha replied, "Thou shalt see it with thine eyes." He did see it with his eyes, and he saw that what was impossible with man is eminently possible with God. God wrought out this great work after his own fashion. The Syrians, alarmed at the noise of what appeared the approach of a great host, and imagining reinforcements were coming down upon them, fled in the twilight in confusion and dismay, leaving their tents and their horses, and strewing the road to the river Jordan with garments and vessels thrown away in their haste.

All the food in the camp became the property of the Israelites. And so a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and the same price was paid for two measures of barley. The man of God and the nation were saved, as the Lord had promised.

With such a history as this, who can be unthankful for mercies promised and for mercies granted? Who can be an unbeliever in the providence of God—a providence so minute, numbering the hairs of the head—a providence so extensive as to embrace the government of every nation of the earth? The record of what God has done once is given to intimate He is able to do again. And if it be true that history, in the course of years, repeats itself, and if it be true that God hath treasured up mercy for all generations, He, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, when He sees a nation convulsed by intestine strife, and shaken to its center by the evil passions of men, and striving to maintain its existence in undiminished independence, in advancing freedom, and in unruptured unity—if the heart of that nation repose its confidence in Him, He will not be an idle spectator. But when His help is needed—without which it is impossible to cohere—and when His help is asked by the mingled voice of men—many myriads, who feel deeply and who love fervently, His help will be manifest, His justice will search out and probe the cause of conflict, His mercy will tone down the bitterness and acerbity of faction, and His wisdom will devise and develop the means to be adopted to establish a genuine reconciliation—a reconciliation which shall be honest, because it is just; which shall be binding, because it is sincere; which shall be lasting, because it is brotherly.

“If the Lord would make windows in heaven.” Hear the word of the Lord; His eye seeth every precious thing; for He looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven.

Of our country it may be said, even now, though in such perplexity: “God turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into water-springs.” Our fields have whitened unto harvest; full sheaves of golden corn have gladdened the sower; our vineyards have been prosperous; our cattle have suffered no decrease. And for His profound mercies in causing the earth to bring forth its fruits and to yield abundance, we call upon all that is within us to praise and magnify His name.

We praise Him for the inestimable advantages we enjoy for the education of the people—advantages to be found in no other country on the face of the globe. We have faith in the rising generation—that when called to take their place and to succeed us in the various departments of life, they will be found indoctrinated in those principles which dignify a people—principles of virtue and honor and truth—principles capable of frowning down the ignoble and unworthy, and of sufficient strength to maintain themselves unshackled and free.

We praise Him for the providential freedom of our institutions, built up by the infusion of His wisdom into the minds of our fathers. Subservient the interests of public morals, while they conduce to liberty, they are not without the imposition of restraints. A wise and equitable admixture of both, tending to the elevation of the masses, is a proof of their adaptation to our common nature, and of their beneficial influence on a great and growing population.

We praise Him for an upright judiciary—the glory of the land of the free. When judges decree judgment without fear and favor, upon the intrinsic merits of the case; when they scorn the bribe of the corrupt, and interpose the shield of their integrity to protect the weak against the strong; when they administer justice as in the sight of God, and with a view of standing before the Judge of all the earth to be judged themselves—a country self-governed as our own has reason to feel secure.

We praise Him for the ability we have to supply, through the medium of commerce, the wants of other nations. We believe God has intended this great country to be the granary of the world. Rivers and railroads are the internal highways for carrying our cereal products. Every harbor is a resting-place for trade; every delta an emporium; every station of importance a *dépôt* for accumulation. Throw down the map of the two hemispheres, cast your eye upon the intricate winding of the lakes—the keels of the ships of America are familiar there. Trace the tracks of a vessel engaged in circumnavigation—they are the recorded pathway on the charts for the guidance of future mariners of an adventurous fellow-countryman, now rendered more famous for his capture of the rebel ambassadors. And wheresoever language is the exponent of thought and desire, our sails will be found to whiten the seas, and the Flag of our Union to float on the winds.

We praise Him for the advancement of science, which has lent its aid to overcome geographic difficulties our fathers may have sighed over, but never dreamed of accomplishing. This vast continent is spanned to its utmost extremity by wires running through forests, over

mountains, and across the broad and rolling prairies, along which the subtle fluid courses with a swiftness defying time.

The agile Indian may well wonder that that iron thread, piercing the atmosphere and buoyed on poles not five times higher than himself, can hold communication with a people separated by thousands of miles. Words can travel to the golden regions of California, and to that anomalous community of Utah, while we are traveling the length of our own Broadway. The means of our personal locomotion have improved in the same ratio. From the day that Fulton asked his scoffing passengers to suspend their condemnation for twenty minutes, while he examined his stopped engine, contending with the stream of our noble Hudson, to the present, steam navigation has immensely advanced. The hand of genius has built a shorter bridge across the boisterous Atlantic, on arches no mathematic eye can scan, and with buttresses no time can wear away, by the construction of larger and swifter vessels; and ere long I predict the voyage to the mother country will not exceed a week. It is instructive to watch the course of this mighty leveler, steam, and the influence it is silently but securely exerting over all the old habits of life here and everywhere.

“Tramp, tramp, across the land—
Tramp, tramp, across the sea—”

goes the iron horse. In high places, in low places, its power is equally felt—felt by the prince and the peasant—by the farmer and the citizen. The solid gain the world derives from its introduction is the increased value put upon the flying hour, and its aggressive invasion of the

region of first ideas—rousing, quickening, and exciting those sluggish minds which else might have slumbered for the ages future, as they had slumbered in the ages past. The engine never tires, but speeds its way through densely populated districts, or along a road where the foot of civilization had never trodden—where wild herds of cattle roamed unchecked, or where unsocial and ferocious beasts of prey found shelter or made lairs in caverns of the rocks or ground. In another form, but on the same principle, iron and steam have entered the domain of human labor, and abridged its toil. The application of steam to printing has aided more to preserve the first law of Heaven among men, and true progression, than all the standing armies, and all the navies, and all the monarchies that have existed, or ever will exist, however huge their numbers or formidable their armaments, or aspiring their intention, or benevolent their design. What interpretation could Milton, with all his learning—or Locke, with all his understanding—or Samuel Johnson, with all his lexicographic acumen—or Benjamin Franklin, with his scientific attainments—or Priestley, or Jonathan Edwards, or George Whitefield, with all their riches of eloquence and scholarship; what interpretation could they give to the words, “STEAM-POWER FOR HIRE,” adapted as a motor for the pointing of a needle; for the construction of the delicate machinery of a watch; or to the rapid raising of a hammer of ten tons weight, and easily manageable in the hands of a child? What the future will develop we know not. It is more than probable steam may be superseded. But this we know—there is a growing tendency to spare the hands and eyes of artisans, both male and female, and throw the unfelt drudgery of heavy work upon some un-

complaining machine, which asks only care in return for what it may produce.

Our literature has kept pace with our science. The press is the handmaid to a purer morality—a higher civilization—a more exalted piety. Popular attention, directed to proper subjects, and popular sentiment based upon instinctive right, are both led onward by those noble minds who are the chief adornment of our era. Nay, they are beyond the era. In addition to what is, they see what should be, and are making preparation for its attainment. In all such efforts they scatter blessings, and dignify their calling. True authorship is the lever of Archimedes, and universal mind the fulcrum whereon it must rest to uplift the world. Other minds there are—sharp, keen, glowing as Damascus steel—minds that seize upon the passing thought, strike it, and malleate it into form and substance—minds who, though not cleric, esteem the world their parish; and in their daily addresses, silent, invaluable, well-studied sermons on the topics touched, they teach the people the value of an honorable self-reliance, the importance of independent thinking, and the manliness of manly action.

No noisome pestilence, begotten in darkness, amid the abodes of want and wretchedness and crime, hath stalked among us, like a foul specter, to smite with death. No epidemic engendered on foreign shores, and brought hither in the holds of ships, or borne on the wings of the wind, hath decimated our villages, cities, or towns. Other nations have been visited with these calamities, mowing down sentinels at their posts, and depopulating vast tracts of territory. For this escape, and the mercy through which it comes, we can not refrain from offering to our

heavenly Father the sacrifice of our devout and grateful thanksgiving.

But, above all, we praise Him for the freedom with which we may worship. No legal restraints, save those of decency, are interposed. We assemble beneath our own vine and fig-tree, none daring to make us afraid. A free people, at liberty to worship according to our conscience—the complete severance of the Church from the State, so powerful an engine in other countries to sustain a sect, but not to advance the kingdom of the Redeemer—has presented so attractive an aspect, through grace, that the absence of religious profession would seem to be the exception rather than the rule. Men are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ—the highest dignitaries in the land setting the example. Nor do men forget or forsake the assemblies of the saints. When the sanctity of the Sabbath has passed, and we enter upon the turmoil of the world, we are invited to sing anthems of joy as we journey to business in the morning; or to seek, by prayer, the presence of the Redeemer and His blessings upon our undertakings, when the rays of the noonday sun are shining in the windows of our homes. The state of our churches, generally, though not all that the warm and ardent heart of the Christian and the Christian pastor could desire, is such that we have ground for praise. Some have been favored with revivals, which show the arm of the Lord made bare; and angels have rejoiced over many who have been made wise unto salvation, and who now bear the cross to wear the crown.

And yet this great, this hitherto prosperous, this highly favored country—ranking inferior to none in the family of

nations, and at peace with all the nations of earth, is plunged into rebellion—the most wanton, the most wicked, the most causeless rebellion. Never in the history of the world's great crimes, and none greater will be found on record, was rebellion so merciless, so ferocious, so ensanguined. Taking advantage of their position, and the weak and feeble, if not most criminal, hands that held the reins of government, designing men, men who had nothing to lose but everything to gain by success, stirred up revolt *first* in a single State, with the avowed purpose of disrupting the Union, bled for and established by our fathers. Was the then Executive ignorant of the facts? He knew all, and more than all, for he knew what was going to be done. In the message sent to the State Legislature of South Carolina by Governor Pickens, in the early part of this present month, November, he says: “On the 17th of December, the day after I was inaugurated, I sent a confederate agent to the President of the United States, demanding Fort Sumter. On the 20th December the President sent General Cushing, a distinguished citizen of Massachusetts, to me with a letter. I had but a short interview with him, and told him I would return no reply to the President's letter, except to say, very candidly, that there was no hope for the Union, and that, as far as I was concerned, I intended to maintain the separate independence of South Carolina, and from this purpose neither temptation nor danger should for a moment deter me.” Of course this treasonable resolution was detailed to the President, who did nothing, absolutely nothing, though possessed of all power. Governor Pickens had previously informed mankind that he was “born insensible to fear”—truly a most glorious heritage. But brave men rarely boast their courage; they are mod-

est ; they do not seek to attract public regard by bombastic and baseless self-gratulation ; and he had forgotten, if he ever knew, that the bravest are those who turn pale with fear at the commission of *wrong*, but are bold as men, and lion-hearted in the performance of *right*. Governor Pickens is a living testimony of the frightful perversion, the wretched delusion to which a deliberate course of wrong-doing subjects the wrong-doer. What I am about to tell you is history, from the very purest of sources, though derived from its originator, who is fearless only in regard to shame. In the same official message he says : “The cadets of the Citadel Academy at Charleston, under the immediate command of the scientific officer then at the head of that institution, were the first corps I directed to occupy a new battery on the channel, *with positive orders to open the fire.* * * * On the 9th of January last they drew the lanyard of the very first cannon that was ever fired into a vessel bearing the flag of the old Union, and triumphantly drove her back, filled as she was with armed men to invade our soil, and sailing under special orders. It was this cannon which opened fire upon the Star of the West.” The hand that penned this record never trembled ; the cheek of the writer never blanched ; the heart that gave vitality to the hand never smote him for this stupendous infamy. To turn the cannon of his country against a ship of his country ; to command the young and inexperienced to apply the fuse which sent a death-intended missile, which might have sent hundreds to a watery grave ; to trail the flag under which his own father fought and perished in the dust is the perfection of iniquity, requiring something more than human, and not angelic, to equal or surpass. In keeping with these monstrous proceedings is

his audacious appeal to posterity : "Circumstances placed us in the van in this march to independence. We claim no exclusive merit, but, under severe censure and the most trying circumstances, we only endeavored to do our duty, faithfully and bravely. Events have since vindicated the wisdom and patriotism of our course ; and I confidently appeal to the future with the proud consciousness that posterity will exultingly point to every page of history as tablets on whose marble surface shall be engraved the record of our honor unstained, and of our integrity without a blemish." The Nemesis of history never sleeps. Governor Pickens, and the State of which he is the head, will have their due reward. And if the wide-spread sentiments of the people can influence now, and influence a generation who must derive their knowledge from ourselves, the crimes of the present population of South Carolina, with their penalty, will be read in a page like this : "Charleston, once the chief city of South Carolina, by reason of its atrocious treason, in endeavoring to compass the disruption of the United States, now lies in a mass of ruins. It never did advance as other cities, and hastened more speedily to decay. The providence of the Almighty has been peculiarly severe—as severe as with Sodom and Gomorrah—and a keen remembrance of its iniquity still prevails, so much so that its example is held up to the minds of our children to execrate and avoid. Its commerce is diverted and given to another. For years no ships have visited its port. The few inhabitants that remain realize the abomination of desolation. A curse rests upon it, and even the names of its prominent men are distasteful and despised. The busy hum of congregated merchants has long being silent. The business of her streets has gone, and the grass grows in the

roads. Houses, once the residences of families, whose arrangements would denote both wealth and comfort—the rooms of which, if walls could speak, would tell of converse gay and blasted hopes; houses now roofless, falling, the abodes of unclean birds. The State-house and the legislative hall still remain, but the only sound that strikes the ear is the flapping of the wings of bats. Of the gardens, once radiant with flowers, not a vestige remains. A shapeless mass of tangled weeds—with ivy running up the trunks of trees with destructive luxuriance and tenacity—sucking their life-sap—of which the sere and yellow leaf is too sad an indication, meets the gaze in every direction. The winds sigh through the branches, and the screech owl sends forth her sharp and bitter sorrow.” Does such a record appall? Yet who would regret it? The first instigators of treason should feel individually the accumulated woes of those who have felt the loss of property, the loss of fathers, the loss of husbands, the loss of sons; and, more, they should be made to feel—who draw the sword—a blood-red hand yet wields a sword, to thrust it to the hilt in the quick.

War is at all times to be deprecated; but civil war, internecine strife, is the most relentless when the cause is least. History has revealed to us that an entire generation has passed away since the inception of the idea of secession. Southern men, who despise the appellation of American, by their violent and unchecked language have sown discord among the masses; and appealing to the very worst judges—their passions and their interests—they have declared their property in human flesh and blood, and bone and muscle, was not only in jeopardy, but could never be extended. Southern literature has been

either bold for separation, or tintured deeply with allusions to secession, and the blessings consequent to the independence of the Confederate States. To this end reckless ambition and disappointed hope have been at work with an ardor worth a better cause. Our mints, our arsenals, our arms, our navy-yards, our ships, our officers—trained to the art of war at the public expense—were stolen and taken from us. And the North and the South are arrayed against each other with an army of hundreds of thousands on either side. The South threw down the gauntlet with a sneer, thinking the North too timid to take it up. Do you ask the cause? Do not be misled by believing it a question of free trade or protection. The truth is this, and it can not be concealed: An empire is sought to be established, whose foundations shall be slavery—hourly, daily, yearly, eternal bondage. The Northern mind—the mind imbued with the religion of Jesus—at once the praise, the honor, the savior of the land, abhors the perpetration of involuntary servitude, because it trembles at what God abhors. “He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death”—is the expression of God’s abhorrence of slavery; and the severity of the penalty is a proof of the greatness of the crime. When the present Executive was elected to office he swore to uphold the laws and maintain the Constitution. In the face of Heaven that was his oath; and the Northern army gathered around him on the banks of the Potomac, in Western Virginia, in Missouri, and other places; and the vast navy, afloat and operating, part of which has struck a vital blow at rebellion on the very soil of those who brought about our troubles, and hope to escape their righteous retribu-

tion—are intended to demonstrate his sincerity and his determination, at all hazards, to restore the integrity of the Union. But what is the integrity of the Union? Why are we at war? Surely not for an idea, but for a stern fact. In the hands of God, do we not esteem war as a punishment? And if there be punishment, something must exist for which we are punished. National sins provoke God to anger, and when His fury is kindled He permits war and desolation to come upon a people. This is our punishment—but that is not all. The object of punishment is reformation. We punish crime that we may repress it or prevent it. If, then, slavery be a sin, containing in itself the absolute total of every abomination known upon the earth, from murder downward—and that it is a sin, millions hold here in common with all Christendom—the restoration of the integrity of the Union must mean the restoration of the rebellious States with that eradicated which caused the rupture. Upon this hypothesis, and this alone, can we secure the smile of God. Then this war will purify, and with its inevitable but tremendous evils it will produce incalculable good. Already arguments are canvassed as to the disposition of slaves at the termination of the war. The huge confiscations by the South of Northern property will demand consideration in the settlement. But will the handing over of the human property of traitors, fighting against their country, to loyal Southerners, who have sacrificed all for their loyalty, meet the case? No—a thousand times, no! It would be but a distinction without a difference, and leave the matter more complicated than it now stands.

We owe a debt of gratitude to our brave and noble army—both officers and men—who have gone forth to do

battle for the Union, to preserve our liberties intact and our country from division. Let us bear them in our prayers at the throne of grace, that the God of battles—the sword's great Arbiter—would support them in this righteous conflict, and protect them amid the dull cannon's roar, the murderous burst of shell, the hail of bullets, and the clash of steel.

The hosts who have rushed to the rescue at the call of danger, and who have measured weapons with the enemy, are fired with the ancient patriotism which changed those colonies into this republic. Those who wait to join the fray are patriots too, whose martial honor is as bright as ever glowed within human bosoms. From the North, and the East, and the West have they come, in all the vigor, and strength, and steadfastness of lusty manhood. The flower of the people are the nation's defenders. Perilous days, undoubtedly, are those that are passing now. They are trying men's souls. But piety is enduring, and is certain to conquer. Faith lifts the veil that hides the seen from the unseen, and beholds, with Elisha, the horses and the chariots of fire. Engagements have been fought, and still will be. In the moment of the deadliest struggle, when the serried ranks of our troops shall press hard upon a desperate enemy—though portions of that foe shall lurk in ambush, in hope of dealing death to others, without exposure to themselves—God is present on the battle-field. And who that put their trust in Him did ever so in vain?

God is in the midst of the sea—in the calm, and the storm, and the tempest. God is with those who go down to the sea in ships for commerce or defensive war. Are there no horses or chariots of fire to surround the bows and sterns of the fleet? They were about Elisha on the

mountain—they are in the air, for they carried Elijah to glory; and, verily, they were in front of our armada on that historic day, and were to our veterans a wall of brass when they captured the forts at Port Royal. An eye-witness says: "On no occasion have I had greater reason to thank the Almighty for bringing me through so many hair-breadth escapes as I this day experienced during the four hours we remained under the fire of the enemy's guns, which could only be likened to a shower of hail. The death-dealing missiles came so fast and thick, that to the sacredness of our cause can we alone attribute the miraculousness of our not having to report a too dearly-bought victory." Not twenty deaths resulted in the squadron from this terrific conflict, and this is but the commencement of the end. Have faith in God; cultivate a spirit of trust and gratitude. There are windows in heaven through which the Lord is watching the progress of this mighty struggle. We may expect emergencies—great emergencies—but, under God, they will be the means of developing great men—men of enlarged comprehension—patriots of singular wisdom—men of unity of feeling and of purpose—men attached rather to principles than solicitous of results—Heaven-sent men—the right men in the right place at the right time—men who will scorn a compromise, but who will heal a breach.

Let us then prayerfully look forward to the time of conscientious and fraternal reconciliation; when the crimes of the present shall pass into history; when Reason shall again assume her sway; when the fiat shall be shouted—

"Plant that flag
On fort and crag,
With the people's voice of thunder!"

and the flag of our Union shall float once more on the breeze from every arsenal and public building in every State, and be loved and revered as heretofore, without the subtraction of one solitary star, without the erasure of a single stripe, and with all its original luster undimmed, untarnished, unobscured.

May God preserve the Union! May it be disrupted never—never!

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